

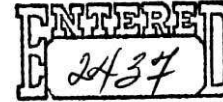
# Appendix 9

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES



Office of the Director

December 5, 2003



Mr. Charles Maddox  
Inspector General  
Office of the Inspector General  
717 14<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Maddox:

I am in receipt of your Management Alert Report (03-I-008) in which you raised concerns regarding the lack of sufficient and reliable communication equipment in many of the housing units at the Oak Hill Youth Center (OHYC).

I was aware of some of the communication problems at OHYC and those problems stem from the wear and tear to an outdated communication system that needs a complete overhaul. The telephones at the OHYC have been placed on a fast track for repair, however, until the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) and Verizon Communications can effectuate these changes, I have instituted new procedures, which provide appropriate communication to the staff and youth at OHYC.

First of all I have ordered that:

- Twenty-five additional two way radios be placed in each of the housing units so that Youth Correctional Officers (YCOs) can communicate with OHYC Control Center. These radios have been assigned to each housing unit and YCOs on duty have access to the radios.
- YSA, in conjunction with the Deputy Director's Office and the Office of the Chief Technology Officer and Verizon Communications, has completed a thorough assessment regarding the telecommunication needs of YSA and they are in the process of establishing a corrective action plan.
- Because of the difficulty with the wiring system at Oak Hill Youth Center, many of the telephones are inoperable. Therefore, in an attempt to alleviate the problem, I have placed cellular phones in each housing unit for the YCOs to use. Youth in the units will have access to the phone that had been used by the Supervisors in the units. This system will ensure that we are in compliance with

2003 DEC -5 AM 9:57

Letter to Charles Maddox  
Re: Management Alert Report  
Page 2

the Jerry M. Consent Decree requirement, that a special phone be designated for youth usage.

- I have issued cellular phones to transport officers who escort youth to D.C. Superior Court.
- As it pertains to access to telephones in the social services unit, supervisors have cell phones with speaker capability and in the event it is necessary to have telephone conferences, these phones will be utilized. In addition, the telephones in the secretarial sections of the social services unit are operational and social workers may receive voice mail messages there. While this response is not one that is best for the employees, the social services unit is an area that will have major renovation as it pertains to communication services once OCTO and Verizon Communications complete the enhancement designs for the OHYC communication system. I will continue to ensure that staff has access to phones even if I must reassign cell phones to each member of the social services staff.

While I am cognizant of the fact that cellular phones are not the most effective manner to operate a facility, we are confronted with major communication system problems which will required extensive time and work to remedy. As YSA goes through a restructuring and reorganization, physical plant enhancements will be made that complement the needs of the staff and youth.

Should you have any questions regarding these procedural and equipment changes, I am available to discuss this matter with you. I can be contacted at (202) 279-6002.

Sincerely,

  
Yvonne Gilchrist  
Director



cc: Robert Bob, City Administrator  
Carolyn N. Graham, Deputy Mayor for Children, Youth, Families and Elders  
Vanessa Chappell-Lee, Deputy Director for Programs, DHS  
James Parks, Deputy Director for Administration, DHS  
Marceline Alexander, Interim Administrator, YSA